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THE
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KING in the COUNTRY.

A

DRAMATIC PIECE,

In TWO ACTS.

Acted at the THEATRES-ROYAL,

At RICHMOND and WINDSOR,

1788.

LONDON,

Printed for the EDITOR, and Sold at No. 62, Great Wild-
Street, near Lincoln's-Inn-Fields; by MESS^I. EGERTON,
Whitehall; MESS^I. COX and PHILLIPSON, James-Street,
Covent-Garden; R. RYAN, No. 351, Oxford-Street;
H. D. SYMONDS, No. 29, Pater-Noster-Row; and
W. RICHARDSON, under the Royal-Exchange. 1789.

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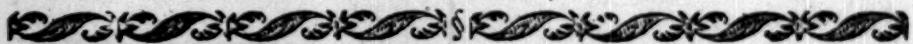
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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

The following Piece is taken from an underplot in The First Part of King Edward the Fourth, written by Thomas Heywood; the dialogue has been altered a little, to render it fit for modern representation; and a few passages have been added for connexion and conclusion.



Dramatis Personæ.

King Edward the Fourth.

Lord Howard.

Sir Thomas Sellenger.

Sir Humphrey Bowes.

Justice Aston.

Lord Mayor.

Recorder.

Sheriffs.

Huntsmen.

John Hobbs, the Tanner of Tamworth.

Young Hobbs, his Son.

Dudgeon, his Man.

Hadland.

Goodfellow.

Grudgen,

The Queen.

The Dutches.

Nell, the Tanner's Daughter.



P R O L O G U E.

YOU lately read in each news-paper,
At morn, at noon, by evening-taper,
Of Cheltenham-water, wooden-house,
Now left to prowling rat or mouse;
With smart bon-mots, and anecdotes
Of Prince and Peasant, Crowns and Cotes;
And how, surprised, the rustics ran
To see the King was but a man;
Wond'ring that blue-coat and bob-wig
Were worn by one they thought so big,
Great Gog or Magog's coat of mail
To cover him would surely fail:
How stars and garters clowns did scare,
And make them at a distance stare;
With Mayors, most loyally addressing,
To beg of Majesty the blessing
Of one short visit to their city,
Which they, no doubt, had trimm'd up pretty;
With *female bell-man, squeaking out
“God save the King!” while rustics shout;
And gracious GEORGE, by chance being nigh her,
Most courteous adds, “God bless the cryer!”
These, and a thousand such-like matters,
By news-papers now worn to tatters,
May prove a theme for some Stage-Writer,
Some Laureat-Bard, or Song-Enditer.
Tho' choice the subject, yet, thro' fear
We might debase it, were it here
Attempted to be dramatized,
It being so far oversized
For our weak talents; we, instead,
Evoke the Spirits of the Dead!

And

* This anomalous expression is not without a precedent; *Man Mid-Wife*, so generally used, being authority for it.

P R O L O G U E.

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And crave you to accept a Story
Of our Fourth EDWARD, England's glory!
And a blunt Tanner; long since writ
By Thomas Heywood, a Stage-Wit:
Antique the phrase, and coarse the manners,
Yet such as suited Kings and Tanners
Who lived three hundred years ago,
When few could to a goose say Bo!
And needy Kings would beg or borrow
What their poor subjects' toil and sorrow
Had scraped together: happier now!
We under no such bondage bow;
Nor King demands, nor subjects grieve,
Beneath our vines content we live!
And read with wonder of those times,
The simple theme of this night's Mimes.
If it afford some harmless mirth,
Nor shew of humour quite a dearth;
Kindly o'erlook whate'er's amiss,
Nor pay our labours with a biss:
And should it please you to commend,
We shall atchieve our wish'd-for end;
For every thought, deed, and endeavour,
Is bent to gain that Prize, your Favour!





T H E

KING in the COUNTRY.

A C T I.

S C E N E A *Foreſt.*

Enter Hobbs and Dudgeon.

H O B B S.

DUDGEON, dost thou hear? look well to Brock, my mare, drive Dun and her fair and softly down the hill, and take heed the thorns tear not my cow-hides, as thou goest near the hedges.

Dud. Master, the bull's hide is down.

Hobbs. Ha! what sayſt thou knave? is the bull's hide down? why then hoift it up again. I'll meet thee at the ſtile, and help to fet all ſtraiſt. [*Exit Dudgeon.*] And yet, heaven help us, it is a crooked world, and an unthrifty; for ſome that have ne'er a ſhoe had rather go barefoot, than buy clout-leather to mend the old, when they can get no new; well, heaven mend *them*, tho' they will not mend their *ſhoes*. Let me fee by my executor here, my leather pouch, what I have taken, what I have ſpent, what I have gained, what I have lost, and what I have laid out: My taking is more than my spending, for here's ſtore left. I have ſpent but a groat, a penny for my two jades, a penny to the poor, a penny pot of ale, and a penny cake, for my man and me.—A dicker of cow-hides coſt me ——'ſnails, who comes here? Dame Ploughſhare, or Miſtress what d'ye call her? put up, John Hobbs, money tempts beauty.

Enter

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Enter the Queen and Dutches, in riding dresses, and Two Huntsmen, with bows, &c.

Dut. Well met, good fellow, saw'st thou not the hart?

Hobbs. My heart? heaven bless me from seeing my heart?

Queen. Thy heart? the deer, man, we demand the deer.

Hobbs. Do you demand what's dear? marry, corn and cow-hides.—Mass! a good smug lass. Well like my daughter Nell.

Dut. Camest thou not down the wood?

Hobbs. Yes, mistres, that I did.

Queen. And saw'st thou not the deer imboſt?

Hobbs. By the rood ye make me laugh, ha! ha! ha! what the dickens is it, love! that makes ye prate to me so fondly?

1st. *Hunts.* Why how now, Hobbs, so saucy with the Dutches and the Queen?

Hobbs. *Much Dutches, and much Queen, I trow! these be but women; and one of them is as like my wench as a raw hide is to one that's not tann'd: I would Nell had her cloaths, I would give a load of hair and horns, and a fat of leather, to match her to some Justice, by the meg-holly.

2nd. *Hunts.* Be silent, Tanner, and ask pardon of the Queen.

Hobbs. And ye be the Queen, I cry ye mercy, good Mistres Queen!

Queen. Madam, let's take our bows, and in the standing seek to get a shoot.

Dut. Come bend our bows, and bring the herd of deer.

[*Exeunt Queen, Dutches, and Huntsmen.*]

Hobbs. Heaven send you good striking, and fat flesh.—See if all women, high or low, be not alike. I took the Queen for Dame Ploughshare, as I am a true Tanner.

Enter Sellenger and Howard in hunting dresses.

Hobbs. Soft, who comes here? more knaves yet!

Sel. Ho! good-fellow! saw'st thou not the king?

Hobbs. No, good-fellow! I saw no King.—Which King dost thou ask for?

How.

Much] Ben Jonson uses this word in the same ironical manner, "much wench, or much son!—Whalley's Edition, Vol. I. P. 102.

How. Why, King Edward, what King is there else?

Hobbs. There's another King, and ye could hit on him ; one Harry, one Harry ! and by our Lady they say he's the honestest man of the two.

Sel. Sirrah, beware you speak not treason.

Hobbs. What if I do ?

Sel. Then you'll be hang'd.

Hobbs. That's a dog's death, I'll not meddle with it. But by my troth I know not when I do speak treason, and when I don't ; there's such halting betwixt two Kings, that a man cannot go upright but he shall offend one of them : I would heaven had them both for me.

How. Well, thou saw'ft not the King ?

Hobbs. No ; is he in the Country ?

How. He's hunting here at Drayton-Basset.*

Hobbs. The devil he is, God bles his mastership ! I saw a woman here, that they said was the Queen. She's as like my daughter Nell as ever I see, but that my daughter's fairer.

Sel. Farewell, fellow ; speak well of the King.

[*Exeunt* Sellenger and Howard.]

Hobbs. God make him an honest man, I hope that's well spoken ; for, by the mouse-foot, some give him hard words ; whether he 'zerves um or not, let him look to that ; I'll meddle o'my cow-hides, and let the world wag. [*Enter the King in a riding dress.*] The devil in a dung-cart ! how these roysters swarm in the country now the King is so near. 'deliver me

* " Mr. Urban, I should be obliged to any of your topographical friends, to inform me, why so many towns in North Wiltshire have the addition of *Basset* to their names, as *Wotton Basset*, *Compton Basset*, *Berwick Basset*, &c. &c. ? Every singularity of the kind should be traced to its source ; as it frequently produces exemplifications of ancient customs, or leads imperceptibly to discussions of antiquity, that seldom fail of rewarding us with some knowledge, that was before lost to all but the incurious tenant of the soil. H."

Gentleman's Magazine, 1788, Part 2, Page 885.

" The several towns in North Wiltshire which have the addition of *Basset* to their names, derive it from their owner *Philip Basset*, who had considerable property in the county, and was a younger branch of the *Basses* of *Edenham* there. See *Dugdale's Bar.* l. 383, 385. P.P."

Idem, P. 973,

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me from this, for he looks more like a thief than a horse ! but a man cannot tell amongst these court-nols who's true.

King. Now I have let my mother and the Queen, and all our train go by, let me awhile forget my Majesty; and, 'stead of royal Edward, as the King's attendant have some sport with yonder rustic. Hollo ! my friend ! good-fellow, prithee stay.

Hobbs. No such matter. I am in haste.

King. If thou be a good-fellow, let me borrow a word.

Hobbs. My purse thou mean'st.—I am no good-fellow, and I pray heaven thou beest not one.

King. Why, dost thou not love a good-fellow.

Hobbs. No ; 'tis a bye-word, good-fellows be thieves.

King. Dost thou think I am one ?

Hobbs. Thought is free, and thou art not my ghostly father.

King. In faith, I mean thee no harm.

Hobbs. Who knoweth that but thyself?—I pray heaven he spied not my purse ! [afide.]

King. On my troth I mean thee none.

Hobbs. Well, upon thy oath I'll stay.—Now what say'st thou to me ? speak quickly, for my company stays for me beneath at the next stile.

King. The King is hunting hereabouts ; did'st thou see his Majesty ?

Hobbs. His Majesty ? what's that ? his horse or his mare ?

King. Tush, I mean his Grace.

Hobbs. Grace, quotha ! pray heaven he have any.—Which King doth thou 'quire for ?

King. Why, for King Edward.—Know'st thou any more Kings than one ?

Hobbs. I know not so many, for I tell thee I know none.—Marry, I hear of King Edward.

King. Did'st thou see his highness ?

Hobbs. Now, by my holydame, that's the best term thou gavest him yet ; he's high enough, but he has put poor King Harry low enough.

King. How low hath he put him ?

B

Hobbs.

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Hobbs. Nay I cannot tell, but he has got the Crown from him, much good do him with it!

King. Amen! I like thy talk so well, I would I knew thy name.

Hobbs. Dost thou not know me?

King. No.

Hobbs. Then thou know'st nobody; did'st never hear of John Hobbs, the Tanner of Tamworth?

King. Not till now, I promise thee; but now I do know thee, I like thee well.

Hobbs. So do not I thee.—I doubt thou art some out-rider, that lives by taking of purses, here on Basset-heath.—But I fear thee not; for I have warded all my money in cow-hides, at Coleshill market; and my man and my mare are hard by at the hill-foot.

King. Is that thy grey mare, that's tied at the stile, with the hides on her back?

Hobbs. Ay, that's Brock, my mare; and there's Dun, my nag; and Dudgeon, my man.

King. There's neither man, nor horse; but only the mare.

Hobbs. Od's blue bodkin! has the knave served me so? farewell. I may lose hides, horns, mare, and all, by prating with thee.

King. Tarry, man, tarry! they'll sooner take my bay gelding, than thy grey mare; for I have tied mine by her.

Hobbs. That will I see before I take your word.

King. I'll bear thee company.

Hobbs. If you will, you must; but I had much rather go alone. [Exeunt.]

The SCENE continues.

Enter the Two Huntsmen.

1st. *Hunts.* Now, by my troth, the Queen shoots passing well.

2nd. *Hunts.* So did the Dutchesse, when she was as young.

1st. *Hunts.* Age shakes the hand, and shoots both wide and short.

2nd. *Hunts.* What have they given us?

1st. *Hunts.* Six rose-nobles just.

2nd.

2nd. Hunts. The Queen gave four.

1st. Hunts. Right, and the Dutchels two; had the King come, he would have rained on us showers of gold.

2nd. Hunts. Why, he is hunting, somewhere hereabout.—Let us first drink the Queen and Dutchels' health, and then go seek him.

1st. Hunts. Agreed.

[Exeunt.

Another part of the Forest, at the bottom of the hill.

Enter the King and Hobbs.

King. How say'st thou, Tanner? wilt thou take my courser for thy mare?

Hobbs. Courser, call'st thou him? he's too fine for me! thy skittish jade will neither carry my leather, horns, nor hides. But if I were so mad to change, what would'st thou give me to boot?

King. Nay, boot that's boot-worthy.—I look for boot of thee.

Hobbs. Ha, ha, ha! that's a merry jig! why, man, Brock, my mare, knows *ha* and *ree*; will stand when I cry *ho*, let me get up when I say *hi*, and down when I say *hee*.

King. Well, I'll give thee a noble if I like her pace; lay thy cow-hides on my saddle, and let's jog towards Drayton.

Hobbs. 'Tis out of my way; but I begin to like thee well.

King. Thou wilt like me better ere we part.—I pray thee tell me, what say they of the King?

Hobbs. Of the Kings, thou mean'st.—Art thou no blab if I do tell thee?

King. If the King knows not now, he shall never know it for me.

Hobbs. Mass, they say King Harry's a very advowtry man.

King. A devout man; and what's King Edward?

Hobbs. He's a frank franion, a merry companion, and loves a wench well; they say he has married a poor widow because she is fair.

King. Dost thou like him the worse for that?

Hobbs. No, by my feckens, but the better; for though I be but a plain Tanner, I love a fair lass myself.

King. Prithee, tell me, how love they King Edward?

Hobbs. Faith, as poor folks love holidays.—Glad to have them now and then, but to have them come too often would undo them; so to see the King now and then is a comfort, but to behold him every day would beggar us; and I may say to thee, under the rose, we fear we shall be troubled to lend him money, for we doubt he's but needy,

King. Would'st thou not lend him money if he should need it?

Hobbs. Yes, by my holydame! he shall have half my purse, and I'll sell sole-leather to help him to more.

King. In faith now, which lov'st thou best, Harry or Edward?

Hobbs. Nay, that's a secret! and two may keep it, if one be away.

King. Shall I say my conscience? I think Harry is the true King.

Hobbs. Art advised of that? Harry's of the old house of Lancaster, and that progeny do I love.

King. Then dost thou hate the House of York?

Hobbs. Why, no; for I am just a-kin to Sutton wind-mill; I can grind which way soe'er the wind blow: If it be Harry, I can say well fare Lancaster! if it be Edward, I can sing, York, York for my money!

King. Thou art of my mind, for I say Harry is the lawful King; Edward is but a usurper; fool and a coward,

Hobbs. Nay, there thou lyest! he has wit enough, and courage enough; dost thou not speak treason?

King. Ay; but I know to whom I speak it.

Hobbs. Dost thou? an I were constable, I should be forsworn if I set thee not in the stocks for it.

King. Well, let it go no further; for I did serve King Harry, and I love him best; though now I serve King Edward.

Hobbs. Thou art the arranter knave to speak ill of thy master. But, firrah, what's thy name? what office haist thou? and what will the King do for thee?

King,

King. My name is Ned; I am the King's butler, and he will do more for me than for any nobleman in the court.

Hobbs. The devil he will! the more fool he, and so I'll tell him if e'er I see him; and I would I might see him in my poor house at Tamworth.

King. Go with me to the court, and I'll bring thee to the King; and what suit soever thou have to him, I'll warrant thee to speed.

Hobbs. I ha' nothing to do at court; I'll home with my cow-hides; but if the King will come to me, he shall be welcome.

King. Hast thou no suit touching thy trade? to transport hides, or have the sole selling of leather within a certain circuit; or about bark, or such like, to have letters patent.

Hobbs. By the mass, I like not those patents! for, I think it's pity that only one subject should have, what might do good to many throughout the land.

King. Say'st thou me so, Tanner? well, let's cast lots, whether thou shalt go with me to Drayton, or I go home with thee to Tamworth.

Hobbs. Lot me no lotting! I'll not go with thee; if thou wilt go with me, 'cause thou'rt my Liege's man (and yet I think he has many honester) thou shalt be welcome to John Hobbs: thou shalt be welcome to beef and bacon; and perhaps a bag-pudding: and my daughter Nell shall make a posset for thee ere thou goest to bed.

King. Here's my hand.—I'll but go and see the King served, and be at home as soon as thyself; ay, and, with thy leave and her's, kiss thy fair daughter too.

Hobbs. That's hereafter as it may be; but,
Dost thou hear me Ned? if I shall be thy host,
Make haste, thou wert best, for fear thou kiss the post.

[*Exit Hobbs.*]

King. Farewell, John Hobbs, the honest true Tanner!
I see plain men, by observation
Of things that alter in the change of times,
Do gather knowledge; and the meanest life,

Por-

Portion'd with but content's sufficiency,
Is happier than the mighty state of Kings.

[Enter Howard and Sellenger.]

How now? what news bring ye, Sirs?

Where's the Queen?

Sel. Her highness and your mother, my dread Lord,
Are both invited by Sir Humphrey Bowes,
Where they intend to feast and lodge to night,
And do expect your Grace's presence there.

King. Tom Sellenger, I have other business.

Astray from you and all my other train,
I met a Tanner; such a merry mate,
So frolick, and so full of good conceit,
That I have given my word to be his guest;
Because he knows me not to be the King:
Good cousin Howard grudge not at the jest,
But greet my mother and my wife for me;
Bid them be merry; I must have my humour;
Let them both sup and sleep when they see time;
Commend me kindly to Sir Humphrey Bowes,
Tell him at breakfast I will visit him.
This night Tom Sellenger and I must feast
With Hobbs, the Tanner; there plain Ned and Tom,
The King and Sellenger awhile forgot.

Enter a Messenger, booted, with letters, and kneeling gives them to the King.

How. The Queen and Dutches will be discontent;
Because his Highness comes not to the feast.

Sel. Sir Humphrey Bowes may take the most offence;
But there's no help; the King will have his pleasure.

King. Good news, my boys; Harry the sixth is dead.
Peruse this letter. Sirrah, drink you that, [gives his purse.
And stay not, but post back again for life,
And thank my brother Gloster for his news;
Commend me to him; I'll see him tomorrow night.
How like ye it, Sirs?

[Exit Messenger.
Sel.

Sel. O, passing well, my Liege;
You may be merry for this happy news.

King. The merrier with our host, the Tanner, Tom;
My Lord, take you that letter to the ladies;
Bid them be merry as good news can make them:
And if we see them not before we go,
Pray them to journey easily after us.
We'll post to London, so good night, my Lord.

[Exit Lord Howard.]

And now set forward on thy frolick, Ned!
Come, Tom; the word's *Fat Bacon and Brown Bread!*

[Exeunt King and Sellenger.]

S C E N E, Hobbs's House.

Enter Hobbs, and his daughter Nell.

Hobbs. Come, Nell, come daughter, be your hands and face washed?

Nell. Ay, forsooth, father.

Hobbs. Ye must be cleanly I can tell ye, for there comes a court-not hither to-night, the King's mastership's butler, Ned; a spruce youth; but beware ye be not in love, nor overtaken by him, for Courtiers be slippery lads.

Nell. No, forsooth, father.

Hobbs. God's blessing on thee! that half-year's schooling at Liechfield, was better to thee than house and land, it has put such manners into thee: Ay, forsooth; and no forsooth, at every word. Is supper ready?

Nell. Ay, forsooth, father.

Hobbs. Have we a good barley bag-pudding, a piece of fat bacon, a good cow-heel, a hard cheese, and a brown loaf?

Nell. All this, forsooth; and more, ye shall have a posset: but, indeed, the rats have spoiled your hard cheese.

Hobbs. Now, the devil choak them! for they eat me a whole candle the other night.

Dudgeon. (within) What, Master! Master!

Hobbs. How, now, Knave? what say'st thou, Dudgeon?

Dud. Here's guests come. Where's Ellen?

Enter

Enter Dudgeon.

Hobbs. What guests be they?

Dud. A court-nol; one Ned, the King's butcher, he says; and his friend too.

Hobbs. Ned, the King's butcher? ha, ha, ha! —the King's butler, thou mean't; take their horses, and walk them, and bid them come in doors. [*Exit Dudgeon.*] Nell, lay the cloth, and supper o'th' board. [*Exit Nell.*]

Enter King and Sellenger.

Mass! here's Ned, indeed; and another misproud ruffian.— Welcome Ned! I like thy honesty, thou keep'st promise.

King. I'faith, honest Tanner, I'll ever keep promise with thee:—prithee, bid my friend welcome.

Hobbs. By my troth ye are both welcome to Tamworth! friend, I know not your name.

Sel. My name is Tom Twist.

Hobbs. Tom Twist? belike then you are the King's taylor.

Sel. No, faith.

Hobbs. Ye are welcome both; and I like you well, but for one thing.

Sel. What's that?

Hobbs. Nay, that I keep to myself.—For I grieve to think that pride brings many to extirction.

King. Prithee, tell us thy meaning.

Hobbs. Troth, I doubt ye ne'er came truly by all these gay trappings. 'Tis not your bare wages, and thin fees ye have of the King, can keep ye thus fine; but either ye must rob the King privily, or his subjects openly, to maintain your prodigality.—But, come, let's to supper.—What, Nell! what, Dudgeon!—where be these folks?

Enter Nell and Dudgeon, with a table covered.
Daughter, bid my friends welcome.

Nell. Ye are welcome, gentlemen, as I may say, forsooth.

[*The King and Sellenger kiss her.*]

Sel. I thank ye, fair maid.

King. A pretty wench, faith!

Hobbs. How lik'st her, Ned?

King.

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King. I like her so well, I would ye would make me your son-in-law.

Hobbs. And I like thee so well, Ned; that, had'st thou an occupation, (for service is no heritage, and a young courtier, an old beggar.) I could find in my heart to cast her away upon thee; and, if thou wilt forsake the court, and turn Tanner, here with me at Tamworth, or bind thyself to a Shoe-maker, in Liechfield, I'll give thee twenty nobles, ready money, with my Nell; and trust thee with a dicker of leather to set up thy trade.

Sel. Ned, he offers ye fair, if ye have the grace to take it.

King. He does, indeed Tom; and hereafter I'll tell him more.

Hobbs. Come, sit down to supper. [*They sit.*] Go to, Nell! no more sheep's eyes; ye may be caught, I tell you; these be licorish lads.

Nell. I warrant ye, father. Yet, in truth, Ned is a very proper man; and to'ther may serve, but Ned's a pearl in mine eye.

Hobbs. Daughter, call Dudgeon and his fellows, we'll have a three-man-song, to make our guests merry. [*Exit Nell.* 'Nails! what court-nols are ye? ye'll neither eat nor talk. What news at the court? do somewhat for your meat.

King. Heavy news there. King Henry is dead.

Hobbs. That's light news and merry for your master, King Edward.

King. But how will the commons take it?

Hobbs. Troth, the commons will take it as a common thing, and say, Well! God be with good King Henry! death's an honest man, for he spares not the King.-----

As one comes, another's ta'en away,

And seldom comes a better, as a body may say.

King. Shrewdly spoken, Tanner, by my faith.

[*Enter Nell, Dudgeon, and others.*]

Hobbs. Come, fill me a cup of mother Whetstone's ale, that I may drink to my friends; Here's to ye, Ned and Tom, with all my heart! [*drinks*] and yet, I doubt, if I come to the court, you'll not know me.

C

King.

King. Yes, faith ! Tom shall be my surety, Tanner, I will know thee.

Sel. If thou dost not, Ned, thou deserv'st that the King should not know thee.

King. Come, honest Tanner, I drink to thy fair daughter, Nell ; my wife that may be.

Sel. 'Ifaith Ned, thou may'st live to make her a lady.

King. Tush, her father offers nothing, having no more children but her.

Hobbs. I would I had not, condition she had all ; but I have a knave to my son, just such an unthrift as one of you two ; that spends all on gay cloaths and new fashions, and no work will go down with him, that I fear he'll be hang'd ; heaven blefs you to a better fate ! tho', by my troth, I doubt it; but come, let's drive away care with a good old song.

[*A Song here by Dudgeon, &c.*

Sel. Well sung, good fellows, I would the King heard you.

Hobbs. So would I ; i'faith, I should strain a note for him. Come, take away, and let's to bed—ye shall have clean sheets, Ned, tho' they be coarse ; good strong hemp, of my daughter's own spinning.

King. Thanks, honest Hobbs ! but we'll not go to bed.

Hobbs. What then ? let's ha' more ale.

King. No more, good friend ; we'll mount our horses, and with speed to London, for it is near day ; and, honest Tanner ! gramercy for our hearty cheer. If e'er it be thy chance to come to court, enquire for me, Ned, the King's Butler ; or Tom, of the King's Chamber, my companion, and see what welcome we will give the there.

Hobbs. I have heard of courtiers have said as much as you, and when they have been tried, would not so much as ask their friends to drink.

King. We are none such, believe me, honest Tanner. So now to horse, for we must strait away ; and so, with hearty thanks, friend Hobbs, farewell.

Hobbs. Fare ye well, both ! commend me to the King, and tell him,

I'd ha' been glad to ha' seen his worship here ;
but, come when he will, I promise him good cheer! [*Exeunt.*

A C T II.

SCENE, *An Antique Hall.*

Sir Humphrey Bowes and Justice Aston, seated.

Hobbs, Hadland, Grudgeon, Goodfellow, &c.

SIR HUMPHREY BOWES.

Neighbours and friends, the cause why you are call'd
 Concerns the King's most excellent majesty,
 Whose right, you know, by his progenitors,
 Unto the crown and sovereignty of France,
 Is wrongfully detained by the French.
 Which to revenge and royally regain,
 His highness means to put himself in arms,
 And in his princely person to conduct
 His warlike troops against the enemy.
 But, for his coffers are unfurnished,
 Through civil discord and intestine war,
 For York and Lancaster's disputed claim,
 (Whose bleeding scars our eyes may yet behold)
 He prays his faithful, loving subjects' help
 To further this his just great enterprise.

Hobbs. So, the drift and meaning, whereby as it were, of all your long purgation, Sir Humphrey Bowes, is no more in some respect, but that the King wants money, and would ha' some of his commonality.

Sir H. Tanner, you rightly understand the matter.

J. Afton. Note this withall; where his dread majesty,
 (Our lawful sovereign, and most royal King)
 Might have exacted or imposed a tax,
 Or borrow'd greater sums than we can spare,
 (For all we have is at his dread command)
 He doth not so; but mildly doth intreat

Our kind benevolence, what we will give,
With willing minds towards this mighty charge.

[Enter Lord Howard.
Which to receive, his noble counsellor,
And kinsman, the Lord Howard here is come.

How. Now good Sir Humphrey Bowes, and Justice Aston,
Have ye declared the King's most gracious pleasure?

Sir H. We have, my lord.

How. His highness will not force,
As loan or tribute; but will take your gift
In grateful part, and recompence your loves.

Sir H. To shew my love, though money now be scarce,
A hundred pounds I'll give his majesty.

How. 'Tis well, Sir Humphrey!

J. Aston. I a hundred marks.

How. Thanks, Justice Aston! you both shew your love.
Now ask your neighbours what they will bestow?

Sir H. Come, master Hadland, your benevolence.

Had. O, good Sir Humphrey, do not rack my purse,
You know my state, I lately sold my land.

J. Aston. Then you have money; let the King have part.

Hobbs. Ay, do, master Hadland, do; they say ye sold a
foul deal of dirty land for fair gold and silver; let the King
have some, now, while ye have it; if ye be forborne a
while, all will be spent: for he who cannot keep land, that
lies fast, will have much ado to hold money: 'tis slippery
ware! 'tis melting ware!

How. Gramercy, Tanner!

Sir H. Say, what shall we have?

Had. My forty shillings.

J. Aston. Robert Goodfellow,
I know you will be liberal to the King.

Goodf. O, Justice Aston, be content I pray ye;
You know my charge, my household very great,
And my house-keeping holds me very bare;
Threescore up-rising and down-lying, Sir,
Spend no small store of victuals in a year;
Two brace of greyhounds, twenty couple of hounds;

And

And then thy horses eat a deal of corn ;
 My christmas cost, and friends that then do come,
 Amounts to charge ; I am Robin Good fellow,
 That welcome all, and keep a frolick house ;
 But have no money,—pray ye pardon me.

Hobbs. Why hear you, goodman Goodfellow ! (tho' you are much miscall'd) hear a plain Tanner, who will teach you thrift ; Keep fewer dogs and horses, and then you may feed more men ; yet feed no idle men, 'tis needless charge : but surely you, that for hounds and hunting mates do spare for nought, will something spare unto your king.

Goodf. My brace of angels, by my troth that's all.

Hobbs. Mass ! and 'tis well the curs have left so much ; I thought they would have eaten up thy land ere this.

Sir H. Now, Harry Grudgen.

Grud. What would you have of me ? money I have none, and I'll sell no stock ; here's old polling !—subsidy, soldiers, and to the poor ! and you might have your will, you'd soon shut me out of doors.

Hobbs. Now, by my holydame, neighbour Grudgen, thou'rt but a grumbling, grudging churl ! thou hast two ploughs going, and ne'er a cradle rocking, with many a peck of money ; and wilt not spare a few pounds to the King.

Grud. Marry come up, goodman Tanner, are you so tart ? your prolicateness has brought your son to the gallows almost ; you can be frank of another man's cost.

Hobbs. Thou'rt no good man to twit me with my son ; he may outlive thee yet : my son's in jail ;—is he the first honest man's son that hath been there ? and thou wert a man as thou'rt but a beast, I would have thee by the ears.

How. Friend, thou want'st nurture to upbraid a father
 With a son's fault ; we sit not here for this.

What's thy benevolence to his Majesty ?

Hobbs. His beneligence ? hang him ! he'll not give a penny willingly.

Grud. I care not much to cast away forty pence.

How. Out, grudging peasant ! base, ill-nurtur'd groom ! Is this the love thou bear'st unto the King ?

Gentlemen, take notice of the slave,
And if he fault let him be soundly plagued.
Now, frolick Tanner, what wilt thou afford?

Hobbs. Twenty old angels, and a score of hides; if that be too little, take twenty nobles more: while I have it my King shall never want.

How. The King shall know thy loving, liberal heart.

Hobbs. Shall he, i'faith? I thank ye heartily! but, hear ye, gentlemen, come ye from the court?

How. I do.

Hobbs. Lord, how does the King? and how does Ned, the King's butler? and Tom of his chamber? I am sure ye know them.

How. I do, and they are well.

Hobbs. For want of better guests they were at my house one night.

How. I know they were.

Hobbs. They promised me a good turn for kissing my daughter, Nell; and now I ha' cagion to try them: my son's in Caperdochia, as they call it, in Newgate jail; for peeping into another man's purse: and outcept the King be miterable, he's like to totter for lack of ground to stand on! can that same Ned, the butler, do any thing with the King?

How. More than myself or any other Lord.

Hobbs. A halter he can! by my troth ye rejoice my heart to hear it.

How. Come to the court; I warrant thy son's life; Ned will save that, and do thee greater good.

Hobbs. Then fare ye well, Sirs! — I'll wean my mare's foal, and come up to the King; And you for your pains, two fat hens will I bring. [Exeunt.]

SCENE,—*A Grand Apartment.*

Enter King, Howard, Sellenger, &c.

King. And have our country subjects been so frank, And bountiful in their benevolence, Toward our present expedition?

Thanks

Thanks, cousin Howard, for thy pains herein :
We will have letters sent to every shire,
Of thankful gratitude, that they may know
How highly we respect their gentlenes.

How. One thing, my lord, I had well nigh forgot ;
Your pleasant host, the Tanner of Tamworth —

King. What of him, cousin ?

How. He was right liberal ;
Twenty old angels and as many nobles,
With a score hides, he gave unto your grace ;
And others, seeing him so bountiful,
Stretch'd further than they otherwise had done.

King. Trust me I must requite that honest Tanner.
O, had he kept his word, and come to court,
In faith we should have had good store of mirth.

How. That is not long, my lord, which haps at last ;
He's come to London on an earnest cause.
His son lies prisoner in Newgate-jail,
And is condemned for a robbery.
Your higness pardoning his son's default,
May yield the Tanner no mean recompence.

King. But who hath seen him since he came to town ?
Sel. My lord, in Holborn 'twas my hap to see him
Gazing about ; I sent away my men,
And, clapping on one of their livery cloaks,
Accosted him ; the Tanner knew me strait ;
How now, Tom ? and how doth Ned ? quoth he,
That honest, merry hangman, how doth he ?
I, knowing that your majesty intended
This day in person to come to the Tower,
There bade him meet me, where mad Ned and I
Would bring him to the presence of the King,
And there procure a pardon for his son.

King. Have then a care we be not seen of him,
Until we be provided for the purpose ;
Because once more we'll have a little sport.
Tom Sellenger, let that care be your's.

Sel. I warrant you, my lord ; I will not fail.

Enter Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, Recorder, &c.

King. Welcome, Lord Mayor ! Recorder, Sheriffs, all !
Say, worthy friends, have you well signified
Our thankfulness unto our citizens,
For their late gathered benevolence ?

Mayor. So, please your highness it has just been done ;
Before the citizens in our guild-hall,
Master Recorder made a long oration
Of thankful gratitude for their kind gifts ;
Which they received with so great respect,
And love unto your royal majesty,
As it appear'd to us they sorrowed
Their bounty to your highnes was no more.

King. Lord Mayor, and Sirs, thanks to yourselves and them.
And go ye with us now unto the Tower,
To see the order that we shall observe
In this so needful warlike preparation,
To gain our lawful right from haughty France ;
The better may ye certifie to them,
What need there was of their benevolence.
And, gentle Sheriffs, as we pass along,
A word in private about other matters.
While we to quell our foes abroad to roam,
Let's not forget our subjects' bliss at home !

[*Exeunt.*

S C E N E, *The Tower.*

*Enter King, Lord Mayor, Recorder, Howard, Sellenger,
and the train.*

King. Having awak'd forth of their sleepy dens
Our drowsy cannon, which ere long shall charm
The watchful French, with Death's eternal sleep,
And all things else in readiness for France,
A while we will give truce unto our care.
There is a merry Tanner near at hand,

With

With whom we mean to have a little mirth;
 Therefore, Lord Mayor, and you my other friends,
 I must intreat you not to knowledge me;
 No man stand bare, but as companions all:
 So, Tanner, now come when you please;—and see
 Where, in good time, he comes. Go, Tom, and meet him.

Enter Hobbs.

Sel. What, John Hobbs? welcome i'faith, to court.

Hobbs. Gramercy, honest Tom! where is the hangman Ned? where is that mad rascal? shall I not see him?

Sel. See, there he stands; that same is he.

Hobbs. What, Ned! a plague on thee, how dost thou for a mad rogue? and how, and how? [*Shaking him by the Hand.*]

King. In health, John Hobbs, and very glad to see thee; But say, what wind drove thee to London?

Hobbs. Ah, Ned! I was brought hither with a whirlwind, man; my son! my son! did I not tell thee I had a knave to my son?

King. Yes, Tanner, what of him?

Hobbs. Faith, he's in Caperdochia, Ned; in Newgate-goal, for a robbery: and is like to be hang'd, outcept thou get the King to be more miserable to him.

King. If that be all, Tanner, I'll warrant him; I will procure his pardon of the King.

Hobbs. Wilt thou, Ned? for thole good words, see what my daughter Nell hath sent thee; a hankercher wrought with as good Coventry-blue* silk thread as ever thou saw'ft.

King. And I, perhaps, may wear it for her sake, In better presence than thou art aware of.

D

Hobbs.

* " And she gave me a shirt-collar, wrought over With no counterfeit stuff.

What, was it gold?
 Nay, 'twas better than gold.
 What w^s it?
 Right Coventry blue."

George A Greene, The Pinner of Wakefield, 1599.

By this passage Coventry-blue appears to have been formerly held in great estimation.

Hobbs. How, Ned; a better present? that can't thou not have, for silk, cloth, and workmanship; why Nell made it, man!—But, Ned, is not the King in this company? what's he in the white beard and red petticoat? By the mass, I misdoubt, Ned, that is the King: I know it by my Lord What-ye-call-um's players.

King. How by them, Tanner?

Hobbs. Why, ever when they play an Enterlout, or a Commodity, at Tamworth, the King is always in a white-beard, and a red-gown like him; therefore I 'spect him to be the King.

King. No, trust me, Tanner, that is not the King; but thou shalt see the King before thou goest, and have a pardon for thy son with thee.

Hobbs. Then what is he i'th'red-gown, and he i'th'black?

King. That is the Mayor, Lord-Mayor of London; the other is the Recorder.

Hobbs. What nick-names these Court-nols have for one-another! Mare and Corder, quotha!—We have no such at Tamworth or Liechfield; there is the honest bailiff and his brethren: such words gree best with us.

King. My Lord-Mayor, and good Mr. Recorder, I pray ye, for my sake, to bid this honest Tanner welcome.

Mayor. You are welcome, my honest friend!
In sign whereof, I pray you see my house,
And sup with me this night.

Record. And, if it please you, dine with me tomorrow.

Hobbs. I thank ye, goodman Mare! and Master Corder! but I care not for no meat; my stomach is like to a sick swine's, that will neither eat nor drink, 'till she know what will become of her pig.—Ned and Tom, ye promised me a good turn when I came to Court; either do it now, and save my son from the gallows, or go hang yourselves.

King. No sooner comes the King, but I will do it.

Sel. I warrant thee, Tanner; fear not thy son's life.

Hobbs. Nay, I fear not his life; 'tis his death I fear.

Enter

Enter the Sheriffs and Young Hobbs.

[They kneel.]

1st. Sher. All health and happiness attend my sovereign!

2d. Sher. Here is the young man, Hobbs, condemn'd to die.

Hobbs. Sovereign! and my son! O that ever I was born!

King. Look to the Tanner! chafe his temples, Sirs!

This unlook'd meeting and discovery

Have overpower'd his faculties.

Hobbs. Let me alone,—I'm a dead man!—

Ah, my liege! that ye should deal so with a poor simple Tanner! but its no matter, I can but die.

King. But when, Tanner? can't thou tell?

Hobbs. Nay, e'en when ye please; for I have so defended ye, by calling ye plain Ned, mad rogue, and rascal, that I know ye'll have me hang'd. Therefore, no more ado, but let my son and I e'en be truss'd up together.—And here's another, as honest as yourself no doubt; ye made me call him plain Tom, and I warrant his name is Thomas, and some man of worship too; therefore, let's to our doom, e'en when and where ye will.

King. Tanner, attend! not only do we pardon thee Thy plain and blunt, tho' honest, well-meant speech, But in all princely kindness welcome thee! And thy son's trespass do we pardon too; [Young Hobbs kneels.] With this observance, that he sin no more In such-like sort, else shall he surely die! For he who from his prince's clemency Hath once received a justly-forfeit life, And brings it into jeopardy again, Deserves not mercy, nor e'en pity merits.

Y. Hobbs. If I offend again, my gracious liege! Let me not mercy, nor e'en pity find.

King. 'Tis well! Receive with kindness thy repentant son; And in return for what thou freely gav'st To aid our enterprise 'gainst haughty France, We give to thee and thine in yearly fee An hundred marks; now, Tanner, what dost say?

Hobbs. Why, an'like your kingship, I can scarce say at all! but, I thank ye!—I thank ye for my son's life, I thank ye for not putting me to death; and when I get back to Tamworth, my Nell shall work a scarf, and send ye; and I'll not forget a skin of choice cordovan, of my own tanning, to make ye boots against ye next go a hunting: when, if ye would but once more leave your kingship behind ye, come to my poor hovel, and be plain hail-fellow Ned again, we'd have such a rowse, as should make all the hair on my hides stand an end! and so, farewell!

Heaven bless ye! still I'll say or sing,
Long live your Majesty! God save the King!

King. The Drama ended, EDWARD is no more!
But for his loss we little need deplore;
GEORGE, great and good! yet lives, and may he long!
Join, then, all loyal hearts in cheerful song;
Lift high your voices 'till the roof doth ring,
In dutious homage to great **GEORGE** our **KING**!

Song and Chorus of
“GOD SAVE THE KING!”

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 7, line 2, *read* from seeing my heart!

Page 9, near the bottom, *read* Which King dost thou 'quire for?

Page 12, *ibid.* *read* a fool and a coward.

Page 17, line 18, *read* and t'other may serve.

Idem, line 24, *read* Heavy news there.

Page 18, near the bottom, *read* we will give thee there.

Idem, Divide the last speech but one into verse, e. g.

We, &c.

So now, &c

And so, &c.

The like may be necessary in some other places overlook'd.

Page 23, line 20, *read* Your highness pardoning, &c.

Page 24, line 22, *read* abroad do roam, &c.

Correct also *you* into *ye*, wherever it may occur in HOBBS's speeches.



A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

The Dramatic Piece of “*The King in the Country*,” was compiled and performed last summer, immediately on *His Majesty’s* return from Cheltenham; when Entertainments of various kinds were exhibited at the different Places of Public Amusement, having relation to the Royal Excursion. The Calamity which, to the grief of every good mind, has since befallen *Our Beloved Sovereign*, does not, it is presumed, render the publication of this Drama improper; had the Editor thought it so, it would certainly have been withheld: for, having been honoured with *The Royal Authority* to superintend Theatrical Entertainments these ten years past (during which period it has been necessary for him to adapt pieces of a local, or temporary nature, to Provincial Theatres), no one can entertain a more proper sense of duty, respect, loyalty, and affection, to *Our most gracious King*, whom God preserve and restore!

Written on the Bank of the Thames, opposite KEW,
December 29, 1788.

By *Winter's* chilling breath now *Silver Thames*
Is ice-bound, and his gently-gliding stream,
That late convey'd each product of the land
To all who wanted, still diffusing good,
In torpid stupor lies! But oh! worse grief!
Benign and gracious **GEORGE**, whose every deed
Throughout his holy life was amiable,
Dispensing blessings ever o'er his realms,
Under th' **ALMIGHTY**'s visitation lies!
The stream of reason, and the spring of sense,
Fast bound! close lock'd!

Most merciful, just **GOD**!

As thou still sendest kindly, genial warmth,
To loose the bands of *Winter* in due time;
So may it please **THEE** shortly to restore
To reason, health, and happiness, **OUR KING**!

For the Literary Museum, No. III.

Written by the Author of the Lines on
His Majesty's late Derangement,
inserted in No. I.

PRAIS'D be our God, th' Almighty Lord!
Praise the Most High with one accord;
Let no dissent be heard;
For gracious George, still good and great,
His Mind relum'd, resumes his State:
Nor Anarchy be fear'd.

Ambition, Envy, hide your heads!
Serene he speaks, august he treads,
To re-ascend his Throne;
Th' acclaim of Millions meets his ear,
Th' o'erflowing joy of hearts sincere
Succeeds an Empire's moan.

Fiction avaunt! nor hope to raise
A power unknown in former days,
The Eaglet's eyes to feel;
To blunt his talons, soil his plumes;
While Owl, or Bat obscene, presumes
To mould the Commonweal.

Generous

Generous Hibernia ! thine the praise,
Fit subject for a Hayley's lays,
To scorn a niggard mite !
Him thou deem'st worthy thee to rule,
Maugre the knave, or knave-led fool,
Thou freely dost invite !

Nor thou, Britannia ! proud, disdain,
Should (Heaven avert it !) George again
An invalescence prove,
To emulate thy Sister's soul ;
And give Young George, without controul,
Thy sceptre, faith, and love !

But may his Sire, till Time say no,
And Death compel him to forego,
Through length of days, the Crown,
O'er Britain's Empire mildly reign ;
That when the Heir is call'd again,
It be with full renown !